United Nations S/2017/97

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 February 2017

Original: English

# Fourth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat

## I. Introduction

1. In adopting its resolution 2253 (2015), the Security Council expressed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh)[1] and associated individuals and groups, and emphasized the importance of cutting off its access to funds and preventing it from planning and facilitating attacks. In paragraph 97 of the resolution, the Council requested that I provide an initial strategic-level report, followed by updates every four months thereafter.

2. The present report is the fourth such report (see S/2016/92, S/2016/501 and S/2016/830) and was prepared with the input of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, in close collaboration with the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to Security Council resolution 1526 (2014) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and other relevant United Nations actors and international and regional organizations. In addition to providing an update on the gravity of the threat posed by ISIL and associated groups and entities, I also consider the presence and influence of ISIL outside Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, including in Europe, the Maghreb[2] and West Africa. Also addressed are the efforts of Member States of those regions to implement measures in a number of thematic areas, including in order to counter the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters who either return to their home States or travel to other States, as well as the efforts of the United Nations, its partners and

[1] Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).

[2] Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya.



Please recycle

international and regional organizations to support the undertakings of Member States.

## II. Overview of the current threat

### A. Emphasis by ISIL on external attacks

3. ISIL is militarily on the defensive in several regions, notably in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic. According to reports from Member States, the group has not been able to withstand the sustained pressure within several conflict zones,[1] however, ISIL is partially adapting to this situation. For example, Member States highlighted that the internal communication and recruitment methods of the group are increasingly moving towards more covert methods, such as the use of the dark web, encryption and messengers. Furthermore, attacks perpetrated by ISIL in the Levant demonstrate the group's operational capabilities to expand its immediate areas of attack to neighbouring countries by using links to existing local cells. The group continues to encourage its followers and sympathizers outside conflict zones to perpetrate attacks. In several cases, Member States highlighted that foreign terrorist fighters with the core of ISIL reached out to specific individuals in their countries of origin to encourage attacks. The threat to the aviation sector remains high, as demonstrated by recent attacks against airports in Brussels in March and in Istanbul, Turkey, in June, and against a Daallo Airlines flight in February 2016. Recognizing the seriousness of this particular threat, the Security Council adopted resolution 2309 (2016) in September, emphasizing international efforts to counter the threat to aviation.

### B. Foreign terrorist fighters and returnees

4. Member States emphasized that the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has slowed considerably due to increased control measures of Member States and the diminished "attractiveness" of the core of ISIL as a result of military pressure. One Member State reported that it anticipates that many foreign terrorist fighters will remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, given that most of them who intended to leave had already done so. Several Member States assessed that those who remain in the conflict zone will present a significant threat if they eventually return, given that most are staunchly committed to ISIL ideology. Some Member States neighbouring Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in the Maghreb, highlighted that they are currently dealing with returnees from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq travelling through their territory and the significant number of foreign terrorist fighters who were stopped en route to the Syrian Arab Republic. Some of those returnees will travel to their countries of origin or residence. Others may choose to travel to conflict zones in the region and beyond, thereby posing new risks. Therefore, the flow of returnees entails the risk of spreading the threat posed by individuals loyal to ISIL to new regions.

[1] Several Member States reported that the volume of ISIL core propaganda has declined as a result of military pressure. One also reported a change in the content of propaganda, which increasingly focuses on military engagements rather than on "state-building".

## C. Financial decline of the core of ISIL continues

5. Since my previous report, the financial condition of ISIL has continued to deteriorate, forcing it to operate on a "crisis" budget.[4] The ability of ISIL to attract new recruits has diminished, and fighters are increasingly leaving the battlefield. Furthermore, as described in my previous report, ISIL has continued to impose an array of fees and fines,[5] while internal corruption and theft also continue to plague the group (see S/2016/830, paras. 4 and 5).

6. The significant pressure on the finances of ISIL notwithstanding, the composition of its revenue streams has not changed substantially, given that the group continues to rely mainly on income from hydrocarbon resources and extortion and "taxation", which together account for as much as 70 to 80 per cent of the group's income.[6] However, its income from hydrocarbon resources decreased markedly in 2016. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) estimates that, in 2016, ISIL earned approximately $260 million from illicit oil sales, mainly from oil fields in Deir Ezzor province, Syrian Arab Republic, compared with as much as $500 million in 2015 (see S/2016/92, para. 17). Oil prices are fluctuating considerably, and fuel is scarce. ISIL has nevertheless demonstrated its resourcefulness in fixing or adapting equipment and infrastructure damaged by international air strikes. Furthermore, ISIL appears to have sufficient funds to continue the fight, and many of its hardcore fighters appear prepared to remain and fight without a salary, given that it prioritizes its war machine over minimal services to the population.[7] In addition, despite being under extensive pressure militarily, ISIL continues to exploit cultural sites.

7. While the group's income will continue to shrink as it loses territory, it is crucial for the international community to remain vigilant against the efforts of ISIL to increase its previously minor income stream, or to cultivate new ones and its attempts to find innovative ways to move funds using channels subject to less stringent compliance procedures. Specifically, with the return of journalists and humanitarian workers to areas recaptured from ISIL, Member States have expressed concern about a potential increase in kidnapping for ransom, as well as its increased reliance on donations, including through the abuse of non-profit organizations and fundraising websites.

8. One Member State indicated that it intercepted ISIL facilitators carrying funds to the conflict zone and funds flowing out of the conflict zone. The same Member State reported that some foreign terrorist fighters maintain access to their home bank accounts. They ask sympathizers to transfer money to these accounts, which ISIL facilitators outside the conflict zone then withdraw and provide to ISIL. According to another Member State, due to the reduction by ISIL in fighters' salaries (see S/2016/501, para. 9), fighters are increasingly seeking financial aid

[4] The following is based on official information provided by Member States, unless otherwise indicated.

[5] According to UNAMI, ISIL imposed fines on those selling cigarettes illegally in Mosul, and petty smugglers were fined between $30 and $50.

[6] Other sources of income include kidnapping for ransom, looting of antiquities, external donations, the sale of electricity and agricultural products, and human trafficking.

[7] According to a Member State, ISIL has been reducing its administrative and social expenses.

from relatives in that Member State, resulting in an increase in financial transfers from that State to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. The transfers are made using remittance companies, and the funds are collected in third countries and delivered by couriers to the conflict zone.

# III. Evolving threat posed by ISIL

9. To highlight the threat presented by ISIL to various regions of the globe, in this report I focus on Europe, the Maghreb and West Africa.

## A. Threat to Europe

10. ISIL declared its intent to attack Europe in a speech by Abou Mohamed Al Adnani (QDi.325) in September 2014, in which he called for attacks on the United States of America and countries in Europe in retribution for air strikes against ISIL. ISIL has since conducted a range of attacks in Europe, some of which have been directed and facilitated by personnel specifically sent from its core in the Syrian Arab Republic, such as the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and Brussels in March 2016. In addition, the group enabled attacks in Europe by providing guidance or assistance and inspired a wide range of further attacks through its propaganda.

11. Member States reported that ISIL enablers, primarily based in the Syrian Arab Republic, have encouraged ISIL supporters to mount attacks in their countries of residence. These enablers are organized on a country, regional and language basis and engage online with individuals in their country of origin or previous residence to conduct attacks. The wide range of nationalities, languages and previous places of residence among foreign terrorist fighters in territory held by ISIL increases their global reach.

12. ISIL uses sophisticated online publications to highlight a range of attack methodologies and provide designs for improvised explosive devices. The use of a truck to attack the Christmas market in Berlin on 19 December 2016 mirrors the methodology of the attack in Nice, France, on 14 July 2016. As demonstrated by the tragic loss of life resulting from the attacks in Nice and Berlin and the subsequent attack in a nightclub in Istanbul on 1 January 2017, attacks by individuals inspired by ISIL require few resources but can have devastating consequences. Many of the attacks that appear to have been inspired, conducted in the name of and claimed by ISIL were initially reported as "lone actor" attacks, although subsequent investigations demonstrate that the individuals often received support or resources from other extremists and/or criminal groups.

13. Since my previous report, ISIL has failed to direct any complex, large-scale attacks in Western Europe. According to Member States, this may be due to several factors. The pressure on the core of ISIL in the conflict zone has absorbed considerable resources of the group. In addition, ISIL fighters have experienced increased difficulty travelling from the conflict zone to Europe owing to measures taken by Member States. Moreover, large-scale police and security measures in a range of countries have disrupted both plots and cells across Europe. Member States currently assess, however, that the threat of large-scale attacks remains: according to

one Member State, not all of the operatives of ISIL believed to have been dispatched to Europe to conduct the Paris and Brussels attacks have so far been identified and arrested.

14. Member States have reported that the flow of European foreign terrorist fighters to ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq slowed considerably during 2016 due to a combination of factors. The military campaigns, which have resulted in ISIL losing large numbers of fighters and territory, together with the group's deteriorating financial situation have considerably reduced its draw for foreign terrorist fighters. The measures taken by many European Member States to restrict travel to conflict zones, and in particular measures taken by the Government of Turkey, have also hindered the ability of European foreign terrorist fighters to travel to ISIL-held territory in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

15. As reported by the Monitoring Team in its eighteenth report, the number of foreign terrorist fighters returning to European countries, potentially intending to perpetrate attacks, in combination with those being radicalized within those countries, presents a growing security challenge (see S/2016/629, para. 4). European Member States have reported that between 15 and 40 per cent of their nationals and residents who travelled to Iraq and the Syrian Arabic Republic have now returned. Some highlighted that this includes a rising number of female returnees. A proportion of those returning present a significant threat and are facing appropriate legal and control measures. Other returnees are reported to have become disillusioned with the fighting and the distorted ideology of ISIL and therefore represent a lower threat.

16. A number of Member States reported that they expect that only a small proportion of European foreign terrorist fighters remaining in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic will return home or relocate to other fighting zones. One Member State reported that some are likely to be deterred from returning to their home country for fear of arrest. Others who would like to leave are unable to, due to the group's own control measures. In addition, casualty rates among ISIL fighters are very high and such high rates will continue. One Member State estimated that only 1 in 10 of those remaining and previously resident in Europe will attempt to return, however, those remaining would be hardened fighters and present a significant threat.

## B. Threat to Maghreb and West Africa

17. In Libya, the military offensive has dislodged ISIL from the city of Sirte, one of its most important strongholds outside Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. According to Member States, this has reduced the group's access to resources and operational space. Member States also highlighted that the threat posed by ISIL to Libya and neighbouring countries has not been eliminated. The group's defeat in Sirte led its fighters to disperse and move to other parts of the country. Member States highlighted that overall ISIL has maintained operational capabilities in Libya, as illustrated by recent operations, such as a suicide attack in Benghazi on 18 December 2016, in which several soldiers were killed.[5] Estimates of Member

[5] "Suicide bomber kills seven in Libyan city of Benghazi: officials", Reuters, 18 December 2016.

States vary as to the number of the group's fighters in Libya, ranging from several hundred to as many as 3,000.

18. ISIL continues to present a serious threat to countries neighbouring Libya. On 6 November 2016, ISIL claimed responsibility for the killing of a Tunisian soldier in Kasserine,[9] and, on 15 November, it claimed responsibility for an improvised explosive device attack that wounded 12 Tunisian soldiers.[10] On 11 December 2016, a suicide attack in a cathedral in Cairo killed 25 people. ISIL claimed that the assailant was one of its fighters and threatened to stage further attacks in Egypt.[11]

19. Member States assess that the continuing pressure on ISIL in Libya could lead to ISIL adopting a modus operandi that is more akin to other Al-Qaida affiliates, which could mean that some cells within ISIL may look for a rapprochement with Al-Qaida's affiliates in the region.

20. Although ISIL in Libya experienced setbacks since my previous report, the group has increased its presence in West Africa and the Sahel, as demonstrated by recent ISIL-related attacks in the Niger and Burkina Faso.[12] However, currently the group does not control significant amounts of territory in these regions.

21. Amaq News Agency, one of the propaganda outlets of ISIL, announced on 30 October 2016 that one splinter faction of Al Mourabitoun led by Lehbib Ould Ali had pledged loyalty to ISIL.[13] This development may result in an elevated risk environment within the region. Several Member States emphasized that the core of ISIL had not confirmed the affiliation of this splinter faction. According to the assessment of Member States, this faction may therefore be highly motivated to commit large-scale terrorist acts in order to demonstrate the added value it brings to the core of ISIL as an affiliate.

22. According to Member States, Boko Haram,[14] which declared its loyalty to ISIL in March 2015, is plagued by an internal power struggle and has split into two factions (see S/2016/629, para. 38). One faction continues to be led by Abubakar Mohammed Shekau (QDi.322), and the other is led by Abu Musab Al Barnawi (not listed), the former spokesman of the group. Al Barnawi aims at maintaining an affiliation with ISIL as the group's "West Africa province".[15] Member States highlighted that the Shekau faction, in particular, is under continuous military pressure and confined to the south of the state of Borno and the Sambisa forest.

23. Boko Haram is mainly locally funded. It relies on donations, extortion, theft, including of cattle, commercial activities, such as sponsoring food vendors, and

[9] Amaq News Agency, press release on social media, 6 November 2016.

[10] "Claimed by ISIL", Amaq News Agency, press release on social media, 15 November 2016.

[11] "Killing and wounding nearly 80 crusaders in martyrdom-seeking operation in downtown Cairo", communiqué released on social media, 13 December 2016.

[12] Information provided by a Member State.

[13] Amaq News Agency announcement, distributed by Telegram, 30 October 2016. Al-Sahrawi individually had once before pledged allegiance to ISIL in May 2015. Lehbib Ould Ali also uses the nom de guerre "Adnan Abu al-Walid al-Sahrawi".

[14] Listed as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (QDe.138).

[15] Information provided by a Member State. Al-Naba newspaper, affiliated with ISIL, published an interview with Al Barnawi on Telegram and Twitter, 2 August 2016 identifying Al Barnawi as "governor" of ISIL's "West Africa province".

kidnapping for ransom.[16] Both factions of Boko Haram are financially under strain, and many of their attacks are actually supply runs to steal provisions, such as food and equipment.[17] Member States further indicated that both factions of Boko Haram are no longer able to pay all of their fighters a monthly salary. This has already led to some defections from the group.

24. Boko Haram nevertheless remains a serious threat to regional security, with several thousand combatants still under its command.[18] Most of them have been locally recruited, in addition to the foreign terrorist fighters recruited from the same ethnic tribes as Nigerian Boko Haram fighters. Boko Haram continues to use vulnerable members of the population as suicide bombers, in particular women and children, which remains of concern to Member States.

25. Some Member States highlighted their concern about the ongoing attempts by Boko Haram to spread its influence and commit terrorist acts beyond Nigeria. They noted that Boko Haram is using improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks for sporadic actions outside of Nigeria.

# IV. Responses to the evolving threat

## A. Overview

26. The United Nations, Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations continue to strengthen national and international frameworks to respond to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and to specifically address the global threat posed by ISIL-related trends. On 12 December, at the high-level briefing on international judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and in Security Council resolution 2322 (2016), the Council called upon all States to consider establishing laws and mechanisms that allow for the broadest possible international cooperation, including by downgrading, where appropriate, intelligence for the purposes of sharing it, exchanging biometric and biographic information, engaging in informal police cooperation, exchanging financial information and strengthening mutual legal assistance, and emphasized the need for a coordinated and robust response.[19]

27. Pursuant to the presidential statement of 29 May 2015 (PRST/2015/11), the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Monitoring Team developed a capacity-building implementation plan to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The 37 project proposals address the life cycle of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist

[16] Information provided by a Member State and Financial Action Task Force-Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa-Action Group against Money Laundering in Central Africa, Terrorist financing in West and Central Africa (Paris, FATF, 2016), pp. 10-17 and 33.

[17] Information provided by a Member State.

[18] Information provided by a Member State.

[19] In its resolution 71/248, the General Assembly established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

fighters. Funding in the amount of $27 million, or 22.8 per cent of the total budget of the plan, has been confirmed (see S/2016/92, S/2016/501 and S/2016/830). The Task Force is in the process of reviewing the plan to respond to the changing nature of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.

### 1. Measures to curtail travel and transit

28. In its resolution 71/19, adopted by consensus, the General Assembly called for the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) on transnational organized crime and terrorism, including preventing foreign terrorist fighter travel. Addressing critical gaps in global screening efforts is essential to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.[20] INTERPOL noted that, between October 2016 and January 2017, there was a 63 per cent increase in the number of profiles of foreign terrorist fighters accessible in real time through its criminal information system and a 750 per cent increase in the sharing of information by Member States. As at 20 December, there were 14,338 such profiles in the INTERPOL criminal analysis file on foreign terrorist fighters.

29. Designing and implementing comprehensive border-management strategies continues to be difficult for many Member States. The Security Council has called upon Member States to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities,[21] but only 56 Member States have done so to date.[22] The United Nations is currently providing related assistance to States that are among the 78 identified as the most affected by the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and have not yet implemented advance passenger information systems.[23] During the reporting period, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and partners continued to organize regional workshops on advance passenger information in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa. The workshops focused on international standards and national legal, institutional and technical requirements in order to allow for in-depth capacity-building.

30. The Security Council has also called upon Member States to require that airlines under their jurisdiction provide passenger name records to national authorities, where appropriate, but implementation continues to be uneven. Some States have also voluntarily begun to apply passenger name records requirements to ocean and sea traffic and cruise ships, but a lack of appropriate regulation continues to represent a significant vulnerability.

---

[20] The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, relevant United Nations entities and Member States contributed to a Centre/Global Counter-terrorism Forum document on good practices in the area of border security and management in the context of counter-terrorism and stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, issued in September, that promotes a comprehensive, cooperative, coordinated, and integrated border security management; and the development of a five-year border security management project of the Centre.

[21] See Security Council 2309 (2016); S/2015/377; and Security Council resolution 2178 (2014).

[22] Data as at November 2016.

[23] The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre is implementing the project jointly with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Monitoring Team, the International Air Transport Association, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Organization for Migration and INTERPOL.

### 2. Measures to counter the financing of ISIL

31. During a joint special meeting of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities and the Financial Action Task Force on depriving terrorist groups from accessing, raising and moving funds: practices and lessons learned, held in December, participants noted that ISIL continued to use a wide range of funding methods, including extortion, exploitation of natural resources, small businesses and trafficking activities. The Task Force secretariat has gathered data on the group's funding sources with a view to making available to the member States of the Task Force and similar regional bodies triannual analyses to assist in their efforts to deprive ISIL of funds. Since February 2016, thwarting the financing of ISIL has been included in the agenda of plenary meetings as a permanent item.

### 3. Prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration

32. United Nations entities continue to support the efforts of Member States to strengthen criminal justice. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published a new *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons* at the end of November.[24] Drawing on this guidance, UNODC and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, in close consultation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, have developed a proposal for a technical assistance programme, to be funded by the European Union, the Centre and other donors. The programme aims at strengthening the capacities of national prison administrations to manage violent extremist prisoners in order to prevent radicalization leading to violence by establishing safe, secure and humane conditions in prisons, supporting prisoners in their disengagement from violence and assisting in their reintegration into society upon release.

### 4. Addressing conflict-related sexual violence and vulnerable groups

33. At the 7847th meeting of the Security Council, on 20 December 2016, which was a ministerial-level open debate, the Council discussed the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations, and Member States acknowledged that armed conflicts generate mass displacement of particularly vulnerable groups and create circumstances conducive to exploitation and urged the adoption of human rights-compliant approaches to the management of conflict-driven refugee and migrant flows. In its resolution 2331 (2016), the Security Council recognized the connection between trafficking in persons, sexual violence and terrorism and other transnational organized criminal activities, and condemned all acts of trafficking in persons for the purpose of supporting terrorist organizations or individual terrorists as serious crimes that Member States must appropriately prosecute and penalize. In previous reports, I recalled that ISIL and other groups were using trafficking and sexual violence as a weapon of terror and a source of revenue and that ISIL had engaged in the sexual enslavement of women and girls through trafficking (see S/2016/92,

[24] For the English version, see www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf. Other language versions of the *Handbook*, including in Arabic, French and Russian will be made available in February 2017.

S/2016/501, S/2016/766, and S/2016/949).[25] In a letter dated 20 December addressed to the President of the Security Council, my predecessor conveyed a special report of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict on crimes committed by ISIL, so as to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the members of the Council of the systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and its links to the trafficking in persons (S/2016/1090).

34. In response, some States have instituted special procedures to screen refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those arriving from areas affected by ISIL, to identify victims of trafficking (see S/2016/949). However, the sheer numbers of refugees and asylum seekers could strain existing capacities.[26] UNODC has also assisted government agencies and non-governmental organizations in developing proactive and systematic approaches to the screening and identification of victims of trafficking among refugees and displaced persons fleeing from conflicts.

## 5. Use of information and communications technology, enhanced cooperation with the private sector and the ability to prosecute

35. On 1 December, at the special meeting of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism on preventing the exploitation of information and communications technologies for terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, participants recognized that the use of media platforms had enabled ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities to spread propaganda, share training materials, engage in illicit trading in weapons, identify potential recruits, generate funds and carry out attacks.[27] The online activity of ISIL has fuelled unprecedented growth in the number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to and from Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya, while a lack of legislative coherence across Member States and the absence of an international definition of "terrorist content" pose practical challenges for Governments attempting to gather and share digital information and evidence for investigations and prosecutions.

36. In efforts to combat ISIL online, Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations have increasingly sought to form partnerships with communications service providers and other private companies. In December, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube announced their intention to develop a joint database containing "digital fingerprints" of violent extremist images, designed to facilitate the removal of content that violates website terms and conditions.

---

[25] See also Human Rights Council conference room paper A/HRC/32/CRP.2.

[26] The *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6) found that an increasing number of trafficking victims from conflict-affected States, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Somalia, was detected in States in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. See also Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "As Mosul displacement continues, UNHCR steps up assistance", briefing note, 11 November 2016, available from www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2016/11/5825912b4/mosul-displacement-continues-unhcr-steps-assistance.html; and A/71/384.

[27] The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate organized a technical meeting on the same topic on 30 November, as well as a side event on the misuse of social media for terrorist-financing purposes on 13 December.

## B. Europe

### 1. Measures to curtail travel and transit

37. The increased use of INTERPOL screening databases reflects increased efforts to interdict foreign terrorist fighters. The number of searches conducted in November 2016 was greater than that for the whole of 2015, an increase of 56 per cent across the European Union and 129 per cent within the Schengen zone. A European intelligence platform, under the auspices of the Counter-Terrorism Group on 1 July 2016, was established to facilitate the sharing of real-time intelligence information about suspected foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorists. Article 7 of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism provides for the implementation of a network, available on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis, for the exchange of timely information on foreign terrorist fighters. As at December 2016, 33 States members of the Council of Europe had designated contact points.[28]

38. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) promotes cooperation between its participating States by harmonizing border-related policies and practices, and its Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network and its Policing On-Line Information System, known as POLIS, also serve as platforms to exchange border-related information and experiences.

39. Few European States have implemented advance passenger information systems (see S/2015/683). Although some have introduced advance passenger information requirements, airlines are not all required to collect and transmit this information to national authorities on a systematic basis. The European Union directive adopted in April 2016 on the use of passenger name records for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crimes notwithstanding, to date, only three European States have introduced a requirement for the use of passenger name records.

40. The launch of the European Border and Coast Guard in October 2016 constituted a major step in strengthening the security of the external borders of the European Union. Each State member of the European Union is required to contribute to a standing corps of border guards and other relevant staff, which can be mobilized at short notice to address an emergency at the external border or launch a rapid border intervention.

41. The vast majority of refugees, both in Europe and globally, have no connection to terrorism and have fled their States of origin to escape persecution. Nevertheless, there have been isolated incidents in which persons who have sought, or been granted, asylum in Europe have subsequently been implicated in successful or foiled terrorist attacks. The Security Council has repeatedly called upon Member States to take measures to ensure that terrorists do not misuse asylum procedures, and to do so in a manner consistent with international refugee and human rights law.

42. In practice, Member States often encounter difficulties in taking such measures in a timely manner, especially where asylum seekers constitute part of a

[28] Security Council resolution 2322 (2016) recognizes the I-24/7 network of INTERPOL as a good practice.

large influx of migrants. South-Eastern Europe, in particular, continues to face challenges in this respect, owing to ongoing conflicts in neighbouring regions that have resulted in large flows of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, to and through the region, as well as the transit of foreign terrorist fighters to and from conflict zones. Regional bodies indicate that ISIL may continue to seek to abuse asylum procedures.[29] In response to these challenges, some European States rely on advanced capacities, such as radar and satellite technology, that enable coastguards to monitor the movement of vessels in real time. Some European States have also started to utilize data from the smartphones of asylum seekers who arrive without passports to check their identities and for screening and risk-assessment purposes.

### 2. Addressing inspired or enabled attacks

43. Some States indicate that the military setbacks sustained by ISIL may have prompted pre-existing terrorist networks in Europe to accelerate their plans for attacks in their States of origin and/or residence, without travelling to conflict zones.

44. Some States noted the benefits of establishing joint investigative teams for a fixed period and a specific purpose on the basis of an agreement between or among two or more law enforcement authorities in European Union member States. The European Police Office (Europol) and Eurojust provide support to joint investigative teams in terrorism cases to facilitate the timely exchange of information by States and to reduce the need to rely on more formal, and often lengthier, mutual legal assistance processes. Member States note that posting liaison magistrates or investigators in relevant agencies of other Member States, or in relevant organizations such as Europol or INTERPOL, can have similar benefits.

### 3. Measures to counter the financing of ISIL

45. Despite substantial progress made by European States, they continue to face challenges in effectively operationalizing measures that broaden the criminalization of terrorist financing to cover the financing of travel undertaken by foreign terrorist fighters (see S/2016/501).

46. Recognizing that transactions financing terrorism often involve small amounts of money, some States are evaluating whether current declaration thresholds for the cross-border transfer of cash or bearer-negotiable instruments are appropriate. In addition to imposing new regulations aimed at mitigating the vulnerabilities associated with prepaid debit cards, France has introduced the requirement that all transactions of 1,000 euros or more be traceable (cash payments are no longer accepted) and that cash deposits or withdrawals in excess of 10,000 euros per month and per customer be systematically reported to the financial intelligence unit. Belgium's financial intelligence unit recently put into place an action plan aimed at strengthening coordination among the various agencies involved in countering money-laundering and terrorist financing, granting it access to non-financial intelligence.

47. South-Eastern European States continue to face challenges relating to the cross-border illicit flows of money, as well as an elevated terrorism-financing risk

[29] Europol, "Changes in modus operandi of Islamic State (IS) revisited", November 2016.

derived from the activities of non-profit organizations and informal remittance companies, and those States have taken some steps to address these issues, including undertaking national risk assessments on terrorism financing.

48. While the number of prosecutions for terrorism-financing offences remains low, there have been individual successes, including the recent conviction of two individuals in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for knowingly sending funds through an ISIL courier to a family member who had joined ISIL in Syria and the conviction of two others for providing cash, in person, to an individual suspected of involvement in the attacks in Brussels in March 2016.

### 4. Prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration

49. Delays in receiving responses to requests for mutual legal assistance continue to impede investigations and prosecutions. Member States highlighted the benefits of introducing informal, flexible methods of information-sharing with Member States with which they have close relationships to address challenges relating to evidence obtained from intelligence sources. Such informal arrangements can also facilitate swift responses within the framework of time-sensitive investigations.

50. Member States noted that radicalized individuals, disillusioned with life with ISIL in Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic, who return to their country of origin or previous residence may not be willing to work with Governments to provide information or help to prevent the radicalization of others.

51. Eurojust continues to monitor related developments and trends in the legislation of Member States, and the European Commission works with relevant regional bodies to implement training programmes on counter-radicalization for prison and probation staff. In September 2016, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute organized a scenario-based tabletop exercise, using real cases, with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to identify potential gaps and solutions for rehabilitation and reintegration approaches.

### 5. Preventing and countering violent extremism

52. Member States are developing comprehensive approaches to countering and preventing violent extremism, including broadening partnerships with a range of stakeholders and non-governmental actors to increase the effectiveness of such strategies (see S/2015/939 and S/2016/501).

53. In follow up to the call by the European Commission, in April 2016, for renewed focus in the area of counter-radicalization, the European Union developed the "IMPACT Europe" project, which consists of an evaluation toolkit that draws on a knowledge database on radicalization factors and existing intervention, a training course and a manual, and the project on preventing interdicting and mitigating extremism, known as the "PRIME" project, to develop a model of "lone actor" extremist events.[50] These initiatives rely on the participation of individuals who are credible in the eyes of the targeted individual, such as former members of extremist groups, highlight the role of family, friends and the local community in the de-radicalization process and recognize the need to address psychological factors

[50] For more information on the projects, see http://impacteurope.eu and www.fp7-prime.eu.

and offer alternatives to individuals at risk of radicalization. OSCE also has ongoing initiatives in this area.

54. The European Commission is establishing a network aimed at enabling local stakeholders to invite positive role models from various backgrounds, including entrepreneurs, artists and athletes, to visit schools, youth associations, sports clubs and prisons to share experiences. The "No hate speech" movement of the Council of Europe seeks to raise the awareness of young people and the population at large about the risks of engaging in hate speech. Implemented through national campaigns in 45 States, the project provides alternative ways for young people to engage with each other, online and off line, for positive causes and has rallied partners active in various religious communities and groups. In July 2016, France opened a de-radicalization centre where young people at risk of radicalization can receive guidance on personal and professional matters.

### 6. Use of information and communications technology, enhanced cooperation with the private sector and the ability to prosecute

55. Deeply concerned by the continued abuse of the Internet and social media by ISIL and its affiliates to recruit new members and incite or glorify the commission of terrorist acts, some Member States and the Internet Referral Unit of Europol notify Internet companies hosting websites that contain terrorist content and request that they remove the content on the grounds that it is in breach of the company's terms and conditions.[31]

56. In mid-2016, the European Commission, together with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft, established a code of conduct to combat the spread of hate speech online. In accordance with the code, companies committed to putting into place clear and effective processes to review notifications of illegal hate speech on their services so that they can remove or disable access to such content, also pledging to put into place rules or community guidelines to clarify their prohibition of incitement to violence.[32]

## C. Maghreb and West Africa

### 1. General

57. States of the Maghreb and West Africa are pooling resources regionally to combat terrorism, mindful of their similar challenges, including lengthy, unregulated borders, and endemic problems such as trafficking in weapons, drugs and persons and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In the Lake Chad Basin region, for example, the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram continues to liberate villages, reopen supply lines and secure space for the return of

[31] See ICT4Peace Foundation-Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate "Private sector engagement in responding to the use of the Internet and ICT for terrorist purposes", December 2016, available from http://ict4peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Private-Sector-Engagement-in-Responding-to-the-Use-of-the-Internet-and-ICT-for-Terrorist-Purposes-2.pdf.

[32] European Commission, "Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online"; European Union response to Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate questionnaire regarding a comprehensive international framework to effectively counter terrorist narratives.

normal governance. In West Africa, the security platform of the Group of 5 for the Sahel was launched in November to promote regional cooperation among law enforcement agencies in the region on issues relating to terrorism and transnational organized crime. The Group has also stepped up its strategic engagement with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNODC, under the auspices of the of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre's Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative (I-ACT) in the Sahel, to identify priority capacity-building projects and secure essential support.

58. Following a year and a half of consultations, supported by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the President of Tunisia signed a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, which entered into force on 7 November. In December, at a workshop organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations country team, participants sought to develop cooperation between the recently established National Counter-Terrorism Committee of Tunisia, the United Nations and civil society and to support efforts to ensure that the implementation of the strategy adheres to international human rights norms and standards. Supported by the United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme, Mali is also developing a comprehensive national counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism strategy. Under I-ACT in Mali, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Executive Directorate and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) are contributing to the drafting process, which is expected to be completed in March 2017.

### 2. Measures to curtail travel and transit

59. States of the Maghreb, especially Tunisia and Morocco, have increased their sharing of data on foreign terrorist fighters and their use of INTERPOL databases. Tunisia is extending the use of the INTERPOL I-24/7 global police communications system to its entire territory. INTERPOL has provided training in the Middle East and North Africa region in the use of the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System, continues to support capacity-building efforts and provides equipment to exploit digital evidence and training in Tunisia.

60. In 2016, the Airport Communication Project of UNODC was extended to the Middle East and North Africa region with the aim of strengthening law enforcement capacity at international airports to detect and interdict suspicious travellers, in particular foreign terrorist fighters travelling to or from conflict zones. The Project promotes inter-agency collaboration, as well as direct, secure communication among international airports and provides on-site access to INTERPOL databases. It currently covers five countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. In December, 38 Moroccan police officers were trained in the identification of fraudulent travel documents. Training of law enforcement, customs and intelligence services in passenger profiling, risk analysis techniques, cargo screening, airport security and the analysis of advance passenger information and passenger name records will commence in early 2017. With the strong engagement of the

Government of Nigeria, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre is currently developing a training project aimed at strengthening aviation security in Nigeria.

### 3. Addressing attacks inspired or enabled by ISIL

61. In West Africa, INTERPOL assists States in the utilization of digital evidence recovered from terrorist groups and supports the responses of States in the aftermath of major attacks, such as the attack in Ouagadougou in January 2016 and the attack in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2016.

62. In Mali, supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (see S/2015/364, annex), the Justice and Corrections Section, the United Nations Police and the United Nations Mine Action Service at MINUSMA provide targeted capacity-building to assist authorities in effectively responding to terrorism and facilitate effective the investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences. This includes training the security forces of Mali to prevent and respond to suicide attacks. With support from the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, MINUSMA will donate 10 training kits on suicide bomb awareness to Mali. As at 31 October, 65 officers of the national police, gendarmerie and national guard of Mali had been trained. MINUSMA also supported a training funded by the Centre for 50 officers of the national police and the gendarmerie of Mali on the development of an anti-suicide bomb strategy in January 2017.

63. Pursuant to the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, UNODC has delivered technical assistance and capacity-building on proactive and special investigation techniques and on prosecution in terrorism cases, in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and human rights, in countries of the Sahel, in particular Burkina Faso and the Niger.

### 4. Measures to counter the financing of ISIL

64. In October 2016, the Financial Action Task Force, the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money-Laundering in West Africa and the Action Group against Money-Laundering in Central Africa published a joint study on the financing of terrorism in West and Central Africa.[33] The authors of the study considered a number of existing funding sources, the vulnerability of some sectors, in particular money remitters and non-profit organizations, and illicit cross-border cash transfers, as well as the links between terrorist groups and organized criminal groups, in particular in the Sahel. Four of the eight States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and the Niger) recently incorporated into national law the revised uniform law on anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism adopted by the Union on 2 July 2015. However, an extremely limited number of terrorist financing cases have been prosecuted and sentenced, and West African financial intelligence units have received few suspicious transaction reports in relation to terrorist financing.

65. Most West African States have established a national asset-freezing mechanism pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001), but these mechanisms remain untested, even with respect to individuals identified in

[33] Available from: www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/Terrorist-Financing-West-Central-Africa.pdf.

connection with the major terrorist attacks that occurred in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and the Niger in 2016. In April 2016, the Niger and Nigeria established a secure cooperation mechanism between their financial intelligence units to exchange operational financial information on Boko Haram and its supporters.

66. Terrorists continue to use kidnapping to generate funds. A project of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre on combating kidnapping for ransom aims at building the capacity of the Member States and non-governmental organizations of East, West and North Africa to achieve the safe release of hostages while also denying terrorist groups the benefits of ransom payments or political concessions. The Centre held the first capacity-building events in East and West Africa, in Addis Ababa in June and in Accra in November 2016, focusing on Government policymakers and kidnapping for ransom operators. A second workshop, for West African non-governmental organizations, was held in Dakar in December. A further three workshops will be held in North Africa in early 2017.

## 5. Prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration

67. In Morocco, returnees who are foreign terrorist fighters are arrested and investigated at length under the supervision of the prosecution service, in order to assess their psychological and ideological state before they are brought before a court. Within prisons, measures have been introduced to provide psychological and medical care and educational and ideological instruction to detained former fighters. They are given access to education and professional training, as well as training aimed at promoting the virtues of tolerance and peaceful coexistence provided by repentant former fighters and imams to demystify extremist discourse. Families are also involved in the de-radicalization process. The Mohammed VI Foundation for the Reintegration of Detainees plays a pivotal role in the reintegration of returnees through support programmes that encourage former detainees to join microprojects or become self-employed and that place former detainees in local businesses. Repentant detainees give interviews to the media to urge their fellow detainees to renounce violence and choose the path of reconciliation and dialogue.

68. As part of a five-year global project to strengthen the legal regime against foreign terrorist fighters in Middle Eastern, North African and South-East European States, funded by the European Union and others, UNODC, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, continues to provide technical assistance to Member States, focusing on strengthening judicial cooperation in cases involving foreign terrorist fighters. To date, 208 officials have been trained.[34] The challenge of converting intelligence into evidence remains key to the successful prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters and suspected terrorists. The Executive Directorate and UNODC continue to work with relevant agencies to strengthen the capacities of States in this area and facilitated a fifth regional workshop for States of the Maghreb, held in Tunis in January 2017. Mindful of the link between terrorism and organized crime, the Niger recently extended the powers of its

[34] UNODC has carried out several regional activities on the management of violent prisoners for Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon and is planning two national workshops for Egypt and Lebanon for 2017.

specialized counter-terrorism prosecutorial and adjudication units to deal with cases of organized crime.

69. Recognizing that a robust, effective prosecution capacity is essential to an effective criminal justice approach, MINUSMA continues to train magistrates of the recently established Specialized Judiciary Unit in Mali to investigate and prosecute terrorism, building on previous support to expand its technological capacity, establish secure holding cells for suspects under judicial investigation and ensure safe storage of arms and the proper maintenance of physical evidence. MINUSMA also continues to work with UNODC to train the Specialized Investigation Brigade of Mali, established in December 2016. Specialized training supported by Canada will enable the Brigade to analyse telephone metadata.

70. Within the framework of the partnership project of the European Union, the Government of Nigeria, UNODC and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate on assisting Nigeria in strengthening rule of law-based criminal justice responses to terrorism, UNODC conducted 13 capacity-building activities designed to strengthen Nigeria's ability to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism cases.

71. At the request of the Office of the National Security Advisor of Nigeria, the European Union, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNODC held technical consultations and a high-level meeting with Nigeria in December on approaches to prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating persons associated with Boko Haram. The consultations were the first of their kind to be held in West Africa and highlighted the broad scope of the challenges involved in developing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returnees.

72. In Mali, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and MINUSMA continue to train religious leaders and prison psychologists and provide vocational and educational programmes aimed at preventing radicalization and violent extremism in prison settings. In December, in collaboration with MINUSMA, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism and the National Directorate of Prisons and Supervised Education of Mali, the Institute trained prison personnel in the management of potential violent extremist prisoners. A final workshop, to be held in early 2017, will focus on the approach of Mali to the rehabilitation and social reintegration of violent extremists and the development of a medium- and long-term programme of activities in the central prison in Bamako.

73. In Morocco, the Institute conducted two 1-week training courses in October 2016 for psychologists at the National Training Centre for Prison Staff and at the Prison Administration headquarters, as part of a long-term capacity-building project in the region on rehabilitation and reintegration in prisons. In addition, the Institute concluded its research to determine the feasibility of viable alternative programming to incarceration for young offenders in the juvenile justice system in Morocco.

### 6. Addressing conflict-related sexual violence and vulnerable groups

74. The treatment of children recruited by, or otherwise associated with, a terrorist group poses a significant challenge to many Member States. UNODC provides support to States of North Africa, the Sahel and West Africa in this regard and has held several subregional workshops. An expert meeting aimed at the development of

a UNODC handbook on the treatment of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups was held in Vienna in December. In the context of the liberation of Sirte, the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya learned that some female migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, may have been abused, physically and sexually, and subsequently forced into marriage with ISIL fighters. There are a number of different concerns that must be taken into account in order to provide appropriate support to women and children who have been held captive by ISIL and systematically targeted for sexual violence, recognizing that they have been victimized.

## 7. Preventing and countering violent extremism

75. In November, the Sahel Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, with the participation of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, held an expert workshop and plenary meeting in Algiers on national plans to prevent violeat extremism. The discussions focused on national plans to prevent violent extremism, the establishment of networks among regional and national practitioners and the identification of resources. A joint meeting of OHCHR, the Commission of the African Union and the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism on gender and preventing violent extremism was also held in Algiers in November and focused on strengthening the gender dimension of the Commission and its member States, programmes and policies on violent extremism, analysis of promising practices and areas in need of further research and guidance. The participants shared good practices from Algeria, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia, as well as from Latin American States.

76. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations continues to implement projects under the four pillars of its mandate, which are youth, education, media and migration, focusing on empowering civil society groups led by young people. In November, in-person training for young peacebuilders in West Africa focused on providing young civil society leaders with the skills required to build more tolerant and peaceful communities.

77. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute is currently implementing a four-year pilot project on countering radicalization and violent extremism in the Sahel and the Maghreb, aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society and non-State actors, including women's and youth organizations, the media, cultural and religious associations and local communities, to deliver innovative activities and disseminate lessons learned and good practices. During 2016, the Institute also reviewed initiatives to counter violent extremism designed by non-governmental organizations in Maghreb and the Sahel, with a view to identifying certain initiatives for evaluation from 2017 onwards.

78. A project of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism continues to train law enforcement officials on human rights law and human rights-compliant responses to counter terrorism. A training event was held in Abuja in September for 25 mid-to-senior-ranking Nigerian law enforcement and security officials engaged in counter-terrorism to strengthen their knowledge of human rights laws and the principles applicable to their area of practice.

### 8. Use of information and communications technology and enhanced cooperation with the private sector

79. In December, at the third Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, participants noted that the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection has not yet entered into force, and many African States lack the necessary legislation to tackle the threat and protect data. However, there is a need to assist African populations in protecting themselves online, especially in view of the continent's high cellular phone and smartphone penetration rate, and strengthening counter-narratives and alternative narratives to violent extremism and terrorism for African populations by developing content in multiple languages and strengthening digital literacy.

## V. Observations

80. International, regional and national actors agree on the continued need for the development of sustained, coordinated responses to the grave threat posed by ISIL and associated groups and entities. There are 19 international instruments on counter-terrorism, as well as related regional instruments on international terrorism, and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. More needs to be done, however, to enable effective international cooperation, as Member States continue to face significant challenges. This is due, in part, to a lack of harmonized national legislation. The focused engagement of the international community, in particular in the development of approaches to the management of returnees who are foreign terrorist fighters, responses to the use of information and communications technology and financing by terrorist groups and measures to prevent and prosecute attacks by ISIL, will continue to play an important role. It would be useful for Member States to continue to share effective national and regional practices and offer capacity-building assistance to support effective implementation of the requirements of relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.